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PHOENIX HOME+GARDEN

Remodels

TRANSFORMATIONS

and Renovations

Preserving the Past, Designing for the Future

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A mindful makeover honors a Haver Home's history and a family's memories.

Bob and Helen Winkel purchased their 1953 home in Phoenix's desirable Marlen Grove neighborhood in 1980. The house, which was designed by Ralph Haver and features a south-facing yard and large walled courtyard, had been owned by a graphic designer who added the large street numbers to the facade. The couple hired architect Wendell Burnette to update the home, which had remained relatively untouched since it was built. His thoughtful modernizations and addition complement Haver's original vision and do not affect the structure's midcentury curb appeal. Bob bought the silver Jaguar, also from 1953, as a high school graduation gift to himself.



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ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS that caught architect Wendell Burnette's eye when he stepped into the small midcentury dwelling in Uptown Phoenix was a colorful abstract painting displayed on a narrow partition wall between the dining room and kitchen. Filled with bold, Crayola-hued splashes and strokes, the artwork not only enlivened the home's white interior, it also held a surprise: Toward the bottom of the canvas, the shape of a single paintbrush protruded beneath thick layers of paint.

Titled "Paintbrush One," the piece was a collaboration between homeowner Helen Winkel and her two granddaughters when they were only ages 2 and 4. "One of them left the brush in the painting," Helen says with a smile.

Upon hearing the story, Burnette immediately knew that the painting, and the wall on which it hung, had to remain in place.

"To get rid of it would have been criminal," the *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner recalls. "Bob and Helen said, 'Let's change the kitchen completely,' but I knew if I changed the location of that painting, if I changed the environment they had been living in, they would hate me.

"The story with this home is that we didn't want to simplify everything and remove the personality," he

continues. "Instead, we modified the space in which they had raised their family—maintaining its original spirit—so they could live out their days there."

A SENSE OF BELONGING

Helen and her husband, Bob, a former engineer for Honeywell who invented multiple devices used on the Hubble Space Telescope, purchased the home, a modest masonry construction designed by visionary architect Ralph Haver, from its first owner in 1980.

"I've always liked interesting houses," Helen says. "I had lived in a midcentury house from the time I was about 10 years old until I went off to college, and I like the way they feel. This isn't a big house, but it's so comfortable and livable."

Comfort and livability are exactly what Haver had in mind when he envisioned the single-story abodes that make up the Marlen Grove neighborhood, a small U-shaped subdivision comprising about 50 homes designed by Haver and built in the early 1950s. Haver used only four floor plans, however, which are flipped and rotated to create both variety and uniformity. Common design elements include low-pitched roofs, exposed wood beams, glass gables, clerestory windows and open carports.

Forty-five years ago, the neighborhood attracted mostly architects, graphic designers and other creatives. Today, it is one of the Valley's most sought-after locales, with homes selling for upward of \$1 million.

For more than four decades, the Winkels lived in their Haver Home, raising their children and collecting a lifetime of memories from their travels around the world. They made few modifications to their house—some paint here, some new furnishings there—but the layout and finishes remained the same as they were when the couple moved in.


One day, about six years ago, the Winkels heard a knock on their door. It was Burnette. He was renovating a house four doors down the street—of the same model as the Winkels'—and wanted to view a home that had retained most of its original features.

This visit spurred the couple, who were now empty nesters, to begin thinking about their future. And that included remaining in their family home. "We love this neighborhood," Helen says.

Just as Burnette was finishing up with the other house, he received a call. "Bob and Helen said, 'Look,

Helen created this painting with her granddaughters when they were ages 2 and 4. It is titled "Paintbrush One" because one of the girls left a paintbrush to dry onto the canvas. The large colorful artwork played an important role in Burnette's remodel plan. "You will hate me if I change the location of that painting," he told the couple.



A photograph of a dining room with a large sliding glass door, a round wooden table, and colorful climbing figures on the wall. The room features a white ceiling with exposed beams, a large yellow horizontal panel above the door, and a white wall with three colorful climbing figures (red, orange, and yellow) mounted on it. The floor is made of dark brown tiles. The dining table is round and wooden, with several wooden chairs around it. A large window in the background looks out onto a pool and greenery. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Initially, the Winkels wanted to replace the dining room with a living area so they could look out onto the pool. Instead, Burnette kept the floor plan as is and added a large wall-size sliding glass door that not only physically connects the interior with the pool patio but also opens the line of sight across the main rooms. He framed the doors with contemporary 1/4-inch steel plate that pushes outward, making the room feel bigger. He incorporated the same technique on the bay window. The architect replaced the original three-panel center window and wood mullions with a single window, keeping the clerestory windows and lower vent windows. The steel frame serves double duty as bench seating during large parties or when the entire family gathers for meals.

we don't want to move. We need to look at universal design and make sure that if one of us is in a wheelchair, we can still get around," he recalls. "So, that was the principal objective, to make sure they could continue to live here."

PRESERVING THE PAST

The Winkels' home is oriented with the front facing east. A covered patio and carport separate the home from the street. A single central beam painted a bright lemon yellow bisects the home, running the entire length of the interior and under the expansive eaves. A metal gate leads to the entry door, while a low block garden wall shields the glass facade from passersby. And, like all homes in Marlen Grove, the property features a south-facing courtyard. Oversize windows in the kitchen and dining room command a view of the pool.

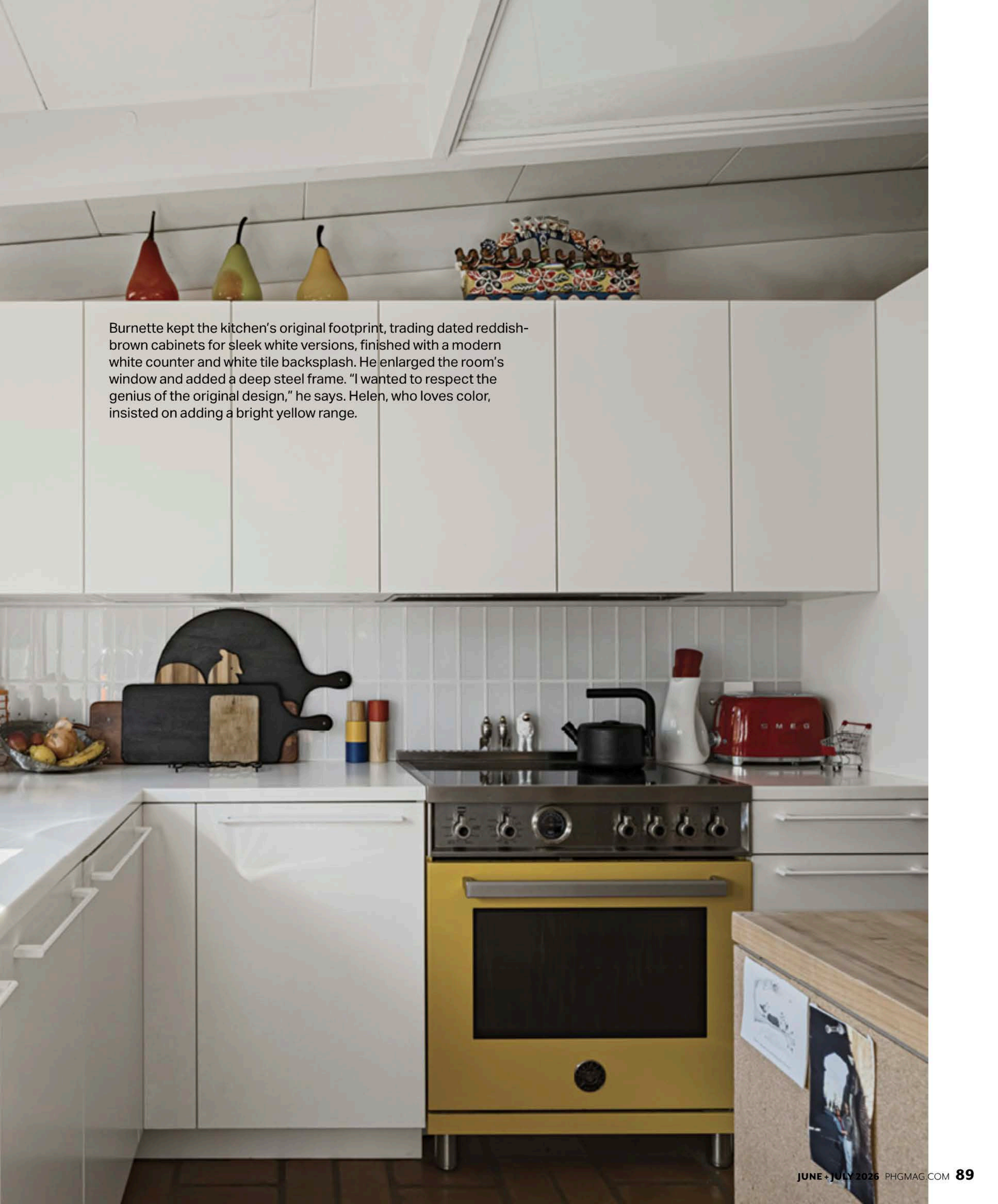
"There were a lot of discussions about really changing things, including flipping the kitchen and living room," Burnette recalls. "But if we did all that, it was going to cost a lot of money. And the kitchen was already incredibly efficient."

In lieu of a complete remodel, Burnette gave fresh life to what was already in place, putting in new flooring and replacing the dated mahogany kitchen with sleek Ikea cabinetry. In the owner's suite, translucent back-painted glass was added to hide a closet. Doors on each end offer enough room for a wheelchair to pass through. The same green glass repeats in the en suite bathroom, which was remodeled to meet ADA requirements.

The most noticeable upgrade is the windows. Gone are the original wood-framed panes. In their place are large steel-framed picture windows and sliding doors that bring a contemporary, almost industrial, touch to the midcentury aesthetic. The three main verticals of the floor-to-gable east-facing front window were removed, and the expanse was filled with a bay window, complete with cushioned seating.

"By being the full width of the space, it makes the room feel bigger," Burnette explains. "That became a theme throughout the house. The kitchen window, the sliding glass door in the dining room, and the owner's suite window and sliding glass door are all pushed out to become these floating reflective planes of the garden and of the pool that create a nice elevation for the courtyard."





Burnette kept the kitchen's original footprint, trading dated reddish-brown cabinets for sleek white versions, finished with a modern white counter and white tile backsplash. He enlarged the room's window and added a deep steel frame. "I wanted to respect the genius of the original design," he says. Helen, who loves color, insisted on adding a bright yellow range.

Because the Winkels wanted to remodel their home in a way that would allow for aging in place, Burnette decided to add a casita that can serve not just as a pool house and outdoor entertainment space but also as a guest room for when the grandkids visit and, eventually, a caretaker's apartment. Narrow clerestory windows separate the steel roof from the dark gray block walls, and a narrow slot window at the end of the hallway lets in additional light. The custom sofa transforms into a queen-size bed, while the TV, when not in use, displays a colorful image by Jean-Michel Basquiat.



It all works really well. I'm proud that we toed the line on this project, that it doesn't look like it's a different house.

▲ WENDELL BURNETTE, ARCHITECT



Keeping the Winkels' current and future needs in mind, Burnette proposed building a garden pavilion—a standalone living space that the couple can enjoy with their grandkids now but that also can serve as a guest house or even caretaker house, when the time comes.

The structure's steel plate roof complements the home's new windows and sits at the same level as the lowest point on Haver's roofline, while its simple lines and dark color palette form a shadow that recedes into the courtyard. The sliding glass walls open fully to connect the indoor volume with the pool and garden, making the space ideal for family and neighbor gatherings. At night, the large custom sectional transforms into a queen-size bed.

"It all works really well," Burnette says. "I'm proud that we toed the line on this project, that it doesn't look like it's a different house."

At night, simple cable lights illuminate home's interior. Holding court, perfectly framed in the large bay window, is the colorful canvas that influenced it all. "Wendell was right," Helen notes, laughing. "We would have hated it if we had had to move that painting."

REMODEL ARCHITECT: Wendell Burnette, Wendell Burnette Architects

For more information, see Sources.

The west-facing glass wall of the casita slides open to offer unobstructed access to the pool and yard. A low bench-like divider wall serves as a barrier to the pool—"so you don't accidentally walk into the water," Burnette says—and offers additional seating. A sunshade can be pulled down from the steel roof and connect to the bench. Landscape architect Michele Shelor added native bunchgrasses, cacti and agaves for a lush garden look that's drought-tolerant and easy to maintain.

The large bay window adds a dramatic effect to the entryway while honoring Haver's original design. "One of the big ideas was the insertion of the steel plate frame," Burnette explains. "The window frames 'Paintbrush One' from the entry and incorporates a bench for overflow seating." The original homeowner had painted the central beam yellow, but the Winkels repainted it a deeper hue to match the yellow kitchen appliances.





captions (3)



Burnette designed the casita to recede into the yard. "It's very diminutive and quiet, acting kind of like a shadow," he points out. Its low roofline is no taller than the outside edge of the gables of the main house, ensuring that it does not compete with Haver's architecture. The large artwork behind the sofa was painted by a friend of the Winkels' son.



The casita's small bathroom is cloaked in dark Endicott tile. The sink space serves both the bathroom and kitchenette, which is on the opposite side of the wall.